

THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
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Time Running Out to Vote

By MAGGIE SHARPE and
SALLY HOGARTY

A few hundred people, including students, parents, teachers and supporters turned out for the March 28 rally for Measure A in downtown Lafayette.

Measure A seeks to counteract some of the cuts to education, particularly in arts and music, from state and local government. The proposed \$112 per parcel tax will sunset in five years. Opponents say that given the current economic climate, this is not the time for more taxes and that



MAGGIE SHARPE

Students from local high schools and interested adults enjoyed performances and speakers at the Measure A rally held in Lafayette's Town Square.

schools should be more creative in how they administer funds.

Measure A is a mail-in only election and all votes must be received at the County Election Office, 555 Escobar Street, in Martinez by May 4. Postmarks do not count. Ballots should be mailed by April [SEE SCHOOLS page 16]



COURTESY OF ORINDA VISION

A proposed change for the Village showing a crescent walkway connecting the Community Center, sculpture garden, park and Hospice tree.

Building Proposals Could Change Shape of Orinda

By BILL RAYNOLDS
Staff Writer

Is the inherent nature of Orinda about to change, and if so, will it be for the better? Who will implement these changes and will they be made with full community input? These are questions several groups and individuals in Orinda are addressing as the city looks at ways to increase downtown business and pedestrian traffic.

For several years, there have been efforts by city planners and the city officials to "revitalize" the downtown areas. The first

step was forming a Planning Process Review Task Force in March 2007 to provide recommendations to the city on streamlining the building process for residents and to look at ways to revitalize the downtown area. These efforts have resulted in changes to zoning ordinances, setback distances, and design standards that have probably gone unnoticed by the majority of local residents. That was then, this is now.

The Task Force released a report in Janu-

ary 2009 with a number of recommendations for residential and downtown changes. One local resident, Ann O'Connell-Nye, who has been attending Task Force and Planning Commission meetings, feels the downtown recommendations have the potential to change Orinda's "semi-rural village" feel into something that reflects an altogether different image. In recent correspondence to *The Orinda News*, she expressed her concern. "The Downtown Task Force and some members of the Planning Commission propose changing the existing 35 foot height limit to 55'," writes Nye. "Our downtown could become canyon like, and the views of our hills could disappear from our human scale city that is so unique."

To address concerns about looming structures, the Task Force proposes the existing 35 foot height limit be reduced to 27 feet at the street-facing façade, and the front setback (from the curb) be increased to 10 feet, which would minimize the effect of a new 55' height limit. The Task Force's January report also states "the topography in most areas recommended for

[SEE DOWNTOWN page 6]

A Young Goddess Chosen for May's Tiger



SHAYNA KADER

Nine-month-old Athena (on top) was left in a cardboard box along with three other kittens in front of a Petco store. Fortunately, she was subsequently adopted by Shayna Kader who says she is a very playful "tiger" who loves to jump in the bathtub, grab the drain plug, and hide it in Kader's shoes. She also likes to groom her best friend and housemate Bella, a one-year-old black cat who doesn't mind Athena's bear hugs.

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FARMERS' MARKET



Seasoned Shopper

Market Opens May 1



BARBARA KOBSAR

In its 14th season, the Orinda Farmers' Market has become the heart of the community on Saturday mornings with shoppers finding their favorite growers and vendors, and families enjoying the outdoors. Curious children "discover" a new fruit or vegetable (maybe rhubarb or beets!), and adults delight in finding fresh, in-season, local produce.

Green is the alluring color at the market in May. Asparagus, fava beans, green beans, green garlic, celery, cucumbers, peas and broccoli are plentiful, but I never overlook bins and baskets filled with new crop red cherries and strawberries either.

Spring greens are at their best this time of year – mild and tender with lots of character. One of my stops for greens is at Ratto Farms stand, known for bunch items like spinach, mustard, beet and dandelion greens, chard, kale and lettuces.

Beets at the market come with their greens attached so I'm really getting two vegetables in one. Remove greens from the beets after purchasing to avoid moisture being pulled from the root. When trimming, leave about one to two inches of the stem attached to the beet, so that when cooked the beets do not "bleed" their color. The earthy flavor of beet greens is mildest when

the plants are young and can be steamed or boiled (like spinach or chard), removing the stems if they're tough. For fun I like to add beet greens to pasta a few minutes before the end of cooking time to turn the pasta a light shade of pink.

Dandelion greens and mustard greens are sharp in flavor, but the smaller, younger leaves add some pizzazz to a salad or an omelet. Older leaves do best in a stir fry or braising.

Swiss chard takes on a new look with varieties like Bright Lights – beautiful red, yellow, orange or white stalks and floppy dark green leaves. Chard is a close relative of the beet, but is grown only for its nutritious leaves. Since the stems need to cook longer than the leaves, it's a good idea to separate the two, cut the stems into one-inch lengths and steam or sauté in chicken or vegetable broth for five minutes before tossing in the leaves to cook for an additional four to five minutes.

Both mizuna and arugula are peppery tasting – arugula usually a little stronger than mizuna. Mizuna can grow as high as 12 to 14 inches but the younger four to six inch dark green, deeply cut fringed leaves are less bitter than large ones.

At the Ledesma stand, I find a baby version of arugula that's hard to pass up. Since arugula is very perishable (lasts only two to three days) the Ledesmas usually sell it separately since other bagged salad greens



BARBARA KOBSAR

Delicious and colorful berries are hard to pass up.

last up to a week.

As a relative of the radish, arugula grows quickly. Small, young arugula leaves stand on their own in a salad while larger ones mix well with milder lettuces such as Red Leaf or Romaine.

Arugula is technically an herb, but has become increasingly popular as a salad green, soup or sandwich ingredient and as an addition to pasta and other vegetable dishes. It's an easy plant to grow in the garden or patio pots, where seeds quickly produce the deeply notched, irregularly shaped leaves – like dandelion or turnip greens.

The name arugula stems from its European heritage, but it's commonly found under other labels such as rocket (French) and rocket (English). Italian cuisine typically uses Parmesan cheese to complement the rich flavor of the arugula and makes a quick dish by combining arugula leaves, olive oil and shaved Parmesan. Heat tends to mellow the peppery flavor, and like other greens can be sautéed and topped with a dab of butter and seasoning such as oregano.

May celebrates the fresh cherry season with red and white varieties. Apricots and peaches make their debut, berries abound, potatoes are dug and squash are great.

The Orinda Farmers' Market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in front of the Community Park and Rite Aid. For more information visit the website at www.cccfm.org or call the market hotline at 925-431-8361.

See recipes page 22.

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
For a Change...



Mark Roberts

Spring is in full bloom. It's the season of change – not only for our gardens but also for how we do and look at things. While it's easy to be a creature of habit (believe me, I know), it's rewarding to take a fresh look at long-held practices and beliefs and ask, "Is it time for a change?" Permit me to offer a few suggestions.

A lot of people tackle home improvement projects in the spring. Before you automatically head for a big box store through the tunnel or in Concord, check out the surprising variety of products you can get at Orinda Hardware. The service is friendly and helpful and the values are good, too – especially when you factor in the value of the time and gas you save.

While I admit there are a lot of terrific

restaurants in neighboring communities, there are plenty of great choices right here in Orinda. A new personal favorite is Pizzeria Amoroma, across Moraga Way from Orinda Hardware. (Home improvement always makes me hungry.) Really good food and menu variety, great service, friendly bar scene and reasonable prices. And your sales tax stays here in Orinda (well, at least some of it doesn't go to Sacramento).

Does your out-of-town auto service provider support organizations like the Orinda Baseball Association, Seniors Around Town, Orinda's Fourth of July celebration, EFO or the Orinda Historical Society? I didn't think so. Orinda Motors sure does and has done so for nearly 20 years. Their service is terrific,

[SEE PRESIDENT page 18]

Start Your Own Family Tradition

By SUSAN MEYER
Contributing Writer

The Orinda Association proudly celebrates its 27th anniversary of hosting Orinda's 4th of July parade and celebration. Lots of great children's activities – including pony rides – are planned as well as great entertainment, food and the fabulous 4th of July parade.

Why not start the celebration early by having your very own banner commemorating Independence Day and Orinda's 25th year as a city? Festive "Orinda Cel-

brates" banners, designed by local artist Nancy Daniels, will be on major Orinda thoroughfares from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Families or businesses can purchase these popular 2.5' x 5' banners for only \$350. To reserve your family or business banner, go to The Orinda Association website at www.orindaassociation.org to download the application form.

Start your own family or business tradition today! For information, call 925-254-0800 or e-mail oa@orindaassociation.org.

Sponsor Haley's Run for a Reason

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Items received by May 7 will have company name listed on flyers.

Visit www.angelhaley.org or email Haleysrun@aol.com for more information.

On May 15, 2000 Orinda residents Suzanne and Donovan Tom lost their 21-month-old daughter. Haley died peacefully in her sleep, and the cause of her death is still unknown. The Toms became involved in the organization Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC). The organization, like SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), explores possible causes and steps for prevention.

Each 4th of July, the Toms and other volunteers organize Haley's Run for a Reason to raise funds for SUDC. The race is in conjunction with the Roadrunners Fun Run, both begin at 8 a.m. on the 4th. The group is currently accepting sponsorships and donations, which must be received by May 7.

The following opportunities are available: **Presented by Sponsors - \$300** - company logo on event t-shirts, 10,000 full-color flyers/posters, and your promotional item or coupon in 400 goody bags; **Corporate Sponsors- \$150** - company logo on 10,000 full-color flyers/posters; **Silent Auction Donors** - Donate to silent auction and be seen by hundreds of local



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- Maintaining and improving the quality of life in Orinda;
- Promoting awareness and discussion of issues that are important to the community;
- Encouraging and recognizing volunteer efforts to enhance the beauty, character, and security of Orinda.

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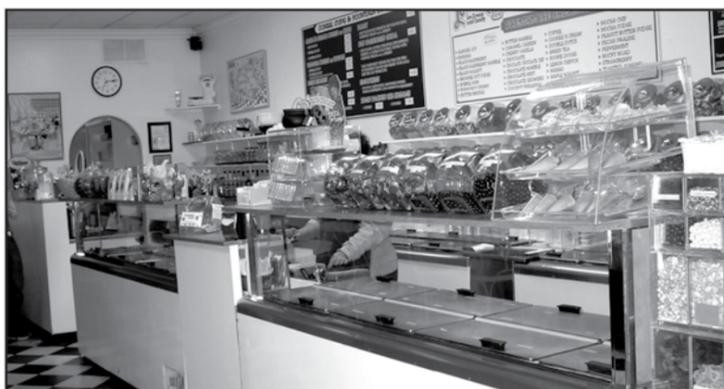
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EDITORIAL

Letters to the Editor

Solving the Leaf Blower Problem

It seems that the focus has been on addressing the symptoms without solving the problem. So here is a naive, simplistic, and some will argue, absurd perspective. Maybe, just maybe, the solution is to cut down all trees. No trees, no leaves. No leaves, no leaf blowers. Furthermore, no leaves, no huge fire hazard. No huge fire hazard, no need for all the fire protection. Last, but not least, changes to the city's planning rules for landscape screening would be in order. You can thank me later for reducing your angst and stress level if you are embarking on a remodel or reconstruction project. I know this is blasphemous. I believe this will quiet the town down as soon as we reduce car traffic, ban barking dogs, shut down construction projects, and keep children indoors. Unfortunately, you will have to live with the horror of seeing your neighbors periodically.

Now before you start typing your rebuttal, I am not advocating changes to the fire district. Public safety is a very serious matter. We only understand it if the emergency is close to home. I am just illustrating a point.

If you counted, I offered three potential solutions. While I am at it, depending on the wind pattern, I could hear traffic noise on Hwy 24 in the evening. For interested parties, I would like to circulate a petition to block Hwy 24 between the hours of 6-10 p.m. in the summer time so I can reclaim my peace and quiet. Who is with me? I guess I stand alone. However, when a tree falls, I bet I will hear it.

— George Fahd

Opposed to Leaf Blowers

I am opposed to the use of power leaf-blowers of any kind for all the well-known reasons. As I do not own a large Orinda estate with a 6000 square foot deck such as a previous writer mentioned, I do not have the "inconvenience" of having to sweep such a large area (or have it swept for me). On our little cul-de-sac just off Moraga Way, for example, we have an outside gardener who arrives early in a pick-up truck and tends a few of the yards by firing up his gasoline blower at 7:30 a.m. every day. This is annoying, noisy, unhealthy, and irritating to me and my wife's allergies, but he doesn't seem to care despite requests to cease. In a small and more confined area such as ours, it's much worse than on the larger estates in Orinda Village. Those who want to bike or jog or walk their dog have to put up with this almost every day. I say, no more!

—John Windle,

Be Wary of Orinda's Downtown Plan

There are 17,000+ residents in our city.

Few know about the Orinda Downtown Plan, co-chaired by Orinda's most controversial developer.

Former mayors and residents have spoken out against the proposed looming 55-foot height of structures. Trying to amend the current 35-foot height limit in the Orinda General Plan is very serious.

Walnut Creek residents voted on whether Nieman Marcus should come to their downtown. We haven't had that opportunity in Orinda. We pay the property tax. We should decide Orinda's direction by voting.

Also, the city will not respond to having a Town Hall meeting where residents could gather for one evening to hear the pros and cons. The Task Force and Orinda Vision like to present their plans and not be interrupted by other viewpoints.

The Planning Commission, where recommendations are heard before being sent to the City Council "for approval," has repeatedly changed, postponed or cancelled discussion for months. Publicity is meager. It's impossible for residents to know when to attend to gain information. The item is usually placed at the end of the agenda.

Members of the city-appointed Downtown Task Force, who say repeatedly that they met for two years, seem to think they "deserve" approval. Many in the community have volunteered much longer than that on other issues.

Call the city (253-4200) or register on the website at www.cityoforinda.org to review the agendas for May. The Planning Commission meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday (May 11 & 25) and the City Council on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday (May 4 & 18) at 7 p.m. in the Library Auditorium. Another organization, Concerned Orindans Oversight League (COOL) is holding meetings. They can be contacted at ConcernedOrindans@gmail.com.

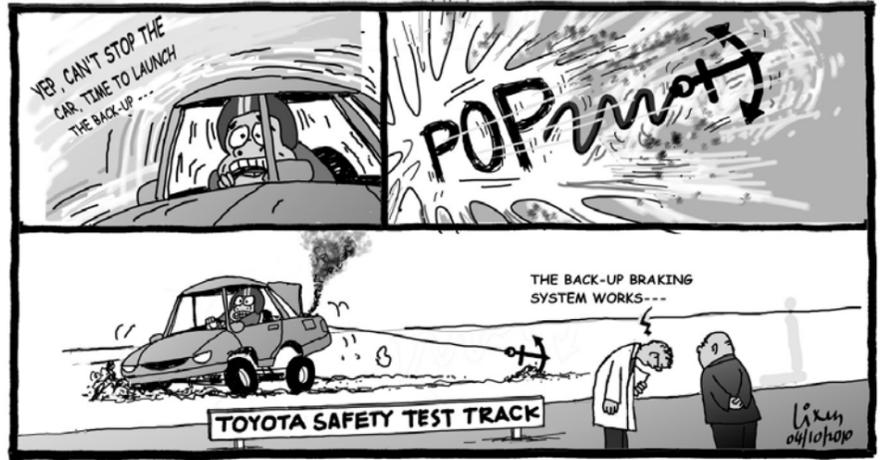
Orinda citizens might not want to allow five volunteers on the City Council to make the decision for remaking our downtown. Just as the \$22 million City Hall was built with little input, while our streets were crumbling, the city is trying to circumvent the public once again.

Getting the consensus of residents seems essential. At least, if the majority decides they want the Downtown Plan, the community could be behind it -- rather than having it imposed on us. Thanks for getting involved.

— Ann & Gary Nye

Student Speaks Out

High school is no fun. As a Campolindo junior, I think I can say without a doubt that most of my peers would agree. But, then again, high school isn't a joke or a playground to fool around in. High school is serious business; serious preparation for college, a career, and a foundation for the rest of your life. High school is a place to learn, grow, and explore new ideas and points of view. I think high school is defi-



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nately one of the major factors in shaping a person.

The rejection of Measure A would severely limit hard-working, aspiring students who are trying to grow as people and figure out what they want to do with their lives. By removing valued, inspirational teachers, cutting extracurricular and advanced classes, and getting rid of counselors dedicated to helping students excel and make the best future they possibly can, our district will lose some of the very things that

make our schools so different from those around the state, or even the nation. Losing such important assets will cause students, from freshmen to seniors, to suffer. A lack of classes, both regular and advanced, and renowned electives will no longer separate us from schools in less-affluent districts. A shortage of teachers will no longer provide students with one-on-one aid and advice that students need to learn and understand difficult concepts. A complete abolishment

[SEE LETTERS page 18]

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For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the July issue is May 17, 2010.

BAYSENG SPICE COMPANY / CHANTA LUANGRATH

County Denies Bayseng Spice Company Appeal

By MAGGIE SHARPE
Staff Writer

The Contra Costa Board of Supervisors voted March 9 to nix a request by owners of the Bayseng Spice Company to lift a stop-work order on construction of their new residence at 1000 Fish Ranch Road. The property lies in an unincorporated area, just above the Caldecott Tunnel. The main objection is the water supply and sewage disposal for the house, which lies in an “out



MAGGIE SHARPE

The Spice House is also the temporary home of Tutor Perini Construction, which is constructing the new bore at the Caldecott Tunnel.

of service” area not covered by EBMUD or a sanitary district.

Bayseng Spice Company owners and Orinda residents Paul and Tamara Attard took out building permits from Contra Costa County between 2004 and 2008 to construct the new home and an adjacent processing plant called The Spice House.

The construction is an expansion of their bay leaf processing and export business across the street at 21 Tunnel Road. The family, including Tamara Attard’s mother and two brothers, launched the business in the 1970s. The family grows thousands of acres of bay trees in California, dries them at the local facility, and exports them all over the world.

The Spice House is 90 percent complete, while the foundation for the residence was already complete, when the county issued the stop-work order in December 2008.

The county claims that the building permits were issued in error because water supply and sewage disposal plans for the project were never approved by the County’s Health Officer. Although a well water permit was granted in 1999 to the former owner of the property, the county says this does not constitute approval of a water



JILL GELSTER

Long-Time City Employee Retires

Chanta Luangrath, shown here with his wife Sounthara at his retirement party, has been unlocking doors, setting up rooms at the Orinda Community Center, Orinda Library, and other city facilities during the evening hours and on weekends for the past 22 years. “If someone’s class or meeting is too hot or too cold, Chanta is the doctor who comes to fix it,” says his supervisor Jim Arth. “He has always been so reliable, so likable that we call him our evening ambassador.” Luangrath, who is from Laos and speaks five languages, often found himself translating for other staff members. He plans on traveling with his wife and, finally, enjoying his weekends at home.

supply to the Attards’ proposed residence. Jason Crapo, deputy director of the Contra Costa County Building Inspection Division, noted: “In this case, Permit #409539 [for the construction of the home] was issued in error and is invalid because it was issued prior to its submission to the County Health

Officer for review of the proposed water supply, and prior to the County Health Officer’s approval of the proposed sewage system for the proposed residence.”

The Attards say they have invested hundreds of thousands in the new development, [SEE APPEAL page 16]

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POLICE BLOTTER / CONTINUATIONS



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POLICE BLOTTER

March 2010

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 123 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 5 incidents were reported on Camino Sobrante, Overhill Rd., El Sereno, Barbara Rd. and Lavenida Dr.

Residential Burglary: 1 incident was reported on La Espiral.

Stolen Vehicle: 3 incidents were reported on Scenic Dr., Ivy Dr. and Barbara Rd.

Grand Theft (theft of more than \$400 value): From a vehicle: 3 incidents were reported on Sally Ann Rd., Moraga Way and Parkway Ct. From a building: 1 incident was reported on Rae Dr. All others: 1 incident was reported on Camino Sobrante.

Petty Theft (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle) From a vehicle: 1 incident was reported on Camino Sobrante. All others: 4 incidents were reported on Via Farallon, Orinda Way, Orchard Rd. and Alice Ln.

Vandalism: 2 incidents were reported on Moraga Way and Las Vegas Ct.

Vandalism – Misdemeanor: 1 incident was reported on Via Floreado.

Arrests
Alcohol – Drunk in public: 3 arrests were made on Moraga Way, Theatre Square and Ivy Dr. at Moraga Way.

Battery – Domestic: 2 arrests were made on El Toyonal and Dalewood Ln.

Driving Under the Influence: MISD: 1 arrest was made on Alice Ln. MISD <.08: 2 arrests were made on Orinda Way and Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante. Felony < .08: 1 arrest was made on Alice Ln.

Misdemeanor: 1 arrest was made on Oak View Terrace.

Recovered Stolen Vehicle: 2 vehicles were recovered, 1 on Davis Rd. and 1 on Lloyd Ln.

Terrorist Threats: 1 arrest was made on Evergreen Dr.

Warrant Arrests: 2 arrests were made on Camino Encinas at Camino Pablo and Brookwood Rd.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving,
 Orinda Police Department

◆ **DOWNTOWN** from page 1

55 feet slopes down from the street thereby minimizing the appearance of building height.” Nye disagrees. “My preference is not to have looming 55’ tall buildings, even with setbacks. Orinda shouldn’t look like Santana Row or other contrived beige cities,” she adds.

History of Task Force

According to the Planning Department’s website, its goal is the “revitalization of downtown Orinda into a vibrant pedestrian-oriented village with a mix of retail, residential, cultural and office uses.” In a report dated August 5, 2009, the Task Force subcommittee charged with developing the proposed downtown changes lists three primary objectives: an infusion of housing, incentives to retail business, and a coordinated merchandising strategy. Key to the achievement of these goals is the increase in maximum building height from 35 up to 55 feet, as well as more flexible zoning standards.

Although several reasons for the height increase are listed in the Task Force report, housing is the driving factor. Based on a June 2000 senior housing and service needs survey commissioned by the City of Orinda, housing close to transit, retail and public services is desired by local seniors. The planned homes are also expected to appeal to persons employed locally, as well as empty-nesters and young professionals who appreciate the downtown amenities without the maintenance issues of traditional single-family homes. The Task Force expects the housing to have a positive impact on local retail businesses within walking distance.

The city is also under state law obligation to provide downtown housing in order to qualify for regional transportation funding.

According to Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu, this process was initiated in late 2008 with six public workshops, and public input was subsequently sought at five joint study sessions of the City Council and Planning Commission held between February and June 2009. Ursu says that public comments were noted and that the recommendations were revised accordingly. Some issues of public concern that led to revisions include creek restoration, public notice, green business issues, bike paths, trails and walkways, and specific zoning modifications.

A number of local residents interested in seeing the proposed changes to the downtown area come to fruition have formed Orinda Vision. This group of volunteers, whose members include urban planners, architects and developers, put together their idea of what Orinda might look like in 2030. Orinda Vision’s Tom Trowbridge says “since the development of a downtown takes place property by property, it is the hope of Orinda Vision to offer multiple property owners and their architects an overall vision that reflects the wishes of Orindans for the future of their town. The intent is an integrated, pedestrian-friendly downtown that works better for its residents because the appeal of the whole physical environment is greater than the sum of its parts.” The group has been showing presentations of their vision to various community groups and at public meetings.

On the other side of the issue is a new [SEE TASK FORCE page 14]

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What About My Tires?

by JEFF JOYCE



Many motorists wonder when is the right time to replace the tires on their vehicles. Should I replace my tires if they still look like they have tread left? This definitely could be a concern. Tires can lose their footing long before they're worn out. Even tires with half their tread left may be riskier than you think. Tests show that tread can give up a significant amount of grip when it's still at the halfway point. Worn tires are not as effective, especially on wet roads. When the roads are wet, marginally worn tires do not have deep enough grooves to channel water out from beneath the tread. The result is hydroplaning, where the tread skims across the water's surface and the vehicle no longer responds to the steering wheel. Tires have wear bars that run across the tread. If the wear bars are flush with the tread's outer surface, the tires are due for replacement. You can also use the old penny test. If the tread doesn't reach the top of the Lincoln's head on the upsidedown penny, your tires are done.

How about when tires appear to be worn only on the outer edges but the center still has plenty of tread. Is this a problem? Yes, indeed. When the tread is worn on the edges, you have less traction in the turns. This portion of the tires where the tread and the sidewall meets is called the crown and carries the weight of the car. When the edge of the tire is worn down to the second level of rubber, you're more likely to have a blow out. When inner and outer edges are both worn, it is likely to be due to under inflation. Tire pressure is crucial to good tire wear. If the tire is worn only

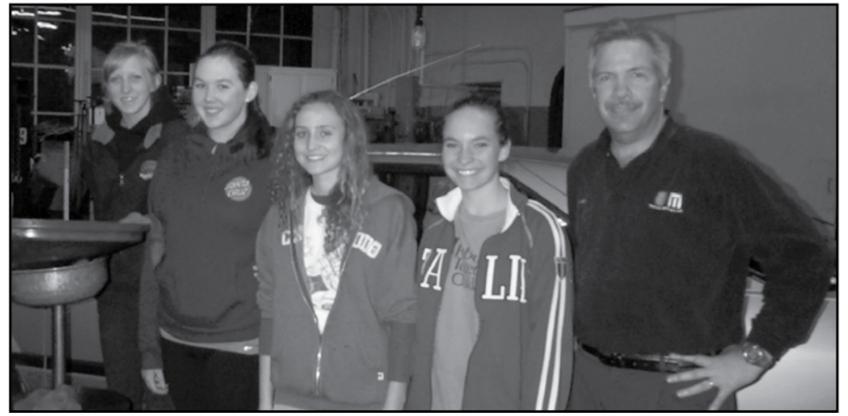
on the inside edge or outside edge, it is likely due to an alignment problem and/or worn suspension parts. Bottom line, if one part of the tire is bad the whole tire is bad. A wheel alignment inspection should always be performed after tires are replaced to determine if you have worn steering or suspension components. Worn struts and bushings will also effect tire wear and road control.

Air pressure loss does contribute to premature tire wear as well as tire monitor alarms, false ABS codes, handling and braking issues. Checking tire pressure regularly is important. You can also try using nitrogen rather than conventional compressed air in your tires. Nitrogen molecules do not break down like those in normal air resulting in a fraction of the air loss. Nitrogen does not have the moisture content of air, which also affects tire longevity. Orinda Motors Express Oil Change and Tire Center is the first tire shop in this area to offer nitrogen inflation service.

OBA Car Wash Benefits Children's Hospital

On **May 8** and **May 15**, from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., **Orinda Motors** will host over 300 players from the Orinda Baseball Association in a fundraising car wash. Money raised goes to the Ricksen Fund which benefits Children's Hospital. Get your car spruced up for spring and help children in need.

Girls Scouts Earn Gold Award at Orinda Motors



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Orinda Troop 30662 went hands on at **Orinda Motors** recently. The future motorists discussed car maintenance and even changed the oil on a car to earn the Car Sense Interest Project as part of their Gold Award requirements. Pictured (L-R) **Katie Latimer, Jamie Fiero, Sofie Woodlee, Cecily Schmidt and John Vanek** from **Orinda Motors**.

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LIBRARY GALLERY

Exquisite Wood Turned from Reclaimed Trees and Much More at Orinda Library Gallery

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

This month's exhibit goes up on Monday, May 6, and continues till the end of the month. It includes wheel-thrown, hand-carved porcelains; unusual photographs depicting nature's sanctuaries; finely attenuated woodturned vessels and an oasis of bold, colorful clay monoprints. Please join these adept artists to learn more about their work at an artists reception on Saturday, May 8 from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

Jacques Blumer of Moraga is a self-described studio artist, working lathes and turning locally found wood into pieces he exhibits in galleries. Not to be pigeonholed as creating either utilitarian or artistic pieces, he insists his natural edge salad bowls are both and loves the idea of them being used often and appreciated at the same time. The idea of people touching his pieces in order to experience what the wood feels like is something he encourages.

Blumer also enjoys teaching at Campolindo and Loma Linda High Schools and Mt. Diablo Adult Education in Pleasant Hill. The teaching keeps his techniques fresh, but he also is an active member of the American Association of Woodturners and the Bay Area Woodturners. Pieces shown include Olive Natural Edge Bowl, 14 x 10" and Black Walnut & Ebony Vase, 12 x 12".

"I'd like to see more of an infrastructure developed to showcase all the local artists in our area," says Blumer, "...and more galleries willing to showcase woodturners." See www.turnedwoodgallery.com for a sneak preview of what can happen when found wood meets a dedicated, gifted woodturner.

Kristin Satzman of San Francisco is an experienced photographer who teaches beginning photography techniques to the Zone System and the crafting of fine negatives and prints. "The Luminous Veil, Visions of Sanctuary" is an apt description of the series of selenium toned silver gelatin prints in the show. "Shrine, Presidio Forest" and "Return, Mt. Davidson," are both 9 x 12 prints framed 16 x 20" and part of her exploration of landscapes in SF Bay Area parks. Satzman is fascinated by the edge where urbanity and wilderness meet. "These landscapes act as a portal leading us out of the hectic energy of city life into a more internal and meditative space," says Satzman.

Because photography forces her to



"Shrine, Presidio Forest," a selenium-toned, silver gelatin print by Kristin Satzman is part of the May exhibit.

slow down to look closely at things, her awareness of beauty unfolding from that crystalline moment allows her to "tell a story" she can share with others. She shoots "all film" and prints in her own darkroom, consistent with the non-digital craft in which she trained.

For those new to photography, her advice is "Pursue what you love in photography and don't be concerned with how the world receives it; learn how to do it well and let your passion take hold. Let go of the expectation that it will support you financially." See more of Satzman's work at www.kristinsatzman.com.

Lynne Meade of Oakland draws and carves thick clay, freehand, when it reaches the bone dry state, using a variety of tools. Finer finishing work is done with dental tools and rough work with metal trimming tools. Organic forms derived from plant and sea life pepper her creations; often these elements are interwoven to create complex and undulating surfaces. She fires her work with a simple, clear glaze. Meade is showing a variety of vessels, some softly colored in pastels. See more of her work at www.lynnemeadeporcelain.com.

Pamela Stefl Toki of Oakland studied with master print maker Mitch Lyons, the originator of clay monoprints. "The immediacy of the process and earth feeling from the clay are aspects that attracted me to this creative technique, and I fell in love with it," says Stefl. She also teaches in the Orinda Union School District. Included in the exhibit are ink as well as clay monoprints, but often they are mixed-

[SEE GALLERY page 16]

--- Advertisement ---

Thorns of Social Networking

By Evan Corstorphine
Portable CIO

When I was young, my Uncle Mike had a CB radio. I suppose because Mike saw me enjoying the radio, it landed in my lap on Christmas morning, 1975. The radio was great fun, and I spent many hours talking with friends.

The experience wasn't without its lessons. Once, I needed an upper-classman just enough to where he came over to my house to have a "chat." A chat by itself wouldn't have been a problem, but the over-stuffed bully he brought was!

Another time, thinking I was alone with the person I was having a conversation with, I gave out my telephone number. It didn't take long for our telephone to start ringing with all sorts of nasty adolescent calls.

Fast forward 35 years, and it's 2010. Instead of a CB radio, your child has a cell phone and a laptop. Kids can now send text messages, pictures and videos. They can also stay connected with MySpace and Facebook. Should you be concerned? At the very least, you should be aware of what's going on.

The great thing about these mediums is they offer the same things I enjoyed as a boy. That is, they let kids connect and stay in touch. On the flip side, they also serve as the gossip channel. The difference is that where the words I spoke on the radio were lost in the ether as soon as they were spoken, now everything is transmitted, stored and becomes a matter of public record. It's on servers on the Internet for a loooooong time.

Why is that a problem? Because it's not 1975, it's 2010. We live in a world that's less Mayberry and more mean, competi-

tive and dangerous. Our little chatterboxes may be undoing their future or endangering themselves or their families with the most innocent of public messages.

For example, the messages about when you're getting home, or when you're going on vacation are perfect for the person casing for a break-in.

I heard a college lacrosse coach speak about scholarship prospects. She was very pointed about the use of social networks, and said coaches use MySpace and Facebook to research kids to whom they're thinking about offering scholarships. She noted they've retracted offers based on materials they read on those sites. Those pictures from the party, or the description of what went on, all are taken as evidence of who a student is and how they'll behave on at college. A moment of fun can turn into a lifetime of regret.

But it's not limited to students. Many adults have found that the IRS uses the medium to find dead-beat parents or to gain evidence of under reported income. Private investigators and lawyers love these sites, which can help prove adultery, fraud or other crimes. Finally, identity thieves can use this free information to aid their "social engineering" of someone's identity, to obtain credit or access to privileged accounts.

There's a lot of beauty in our world, but there are also a lot of creeps, and we have to think differently to protect ourselves. It's just the way it is, so let's be careful out there.

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VISUAL ARTS

Three Orinda Artists in Prestigious Art Show/Sale

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Since childhood, Orinda Native Lisa Steele had dreamed of painting. A class taught by professional artist and Civic Arts Education (CAE) instructor Tesia Blackburn started her on her way. Now Steele, along with 50 fellow artists including Orinda residents Kay Van Hoesen and Pam Bivens, will show her paintings at CAE and the Clay Arts Guild's annual Spring Art Show and Sale. The three-day sale runs April 30 – May 2 at two Walnut

says Steele. "I'm inspired by the colors in nature, and I prefer a very simple composition, which I find calming and conducive to contemplation," adds the artist who often paints with her hands.

Orinda's Pam Bivens spends her days "playing" in the mud at the Clay Arts Guild Studio in Walnut Creek thanks to her son Nicholas. As Nicholas was leaving to attend an MFA program in ceramics, he encouraged his mom to try the medium. She did and now seldom spends a day without her hands in clay. "I'm still in the infancy stage



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kay Van Hoesen displays one of the gourds that she grew in her Orinda backyard.

Shadelands Campus, 111 N. Wiget Lane (ceramics, painting, photography, jewelry and textiles); and at Civic Park in the Clay Arts Guild Studio, 1365 Civic Drive at Broadway. The event continues on May 1 from 10 a.m. – 9 p.m. and May 2 from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. at Civic Park and 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. at Shadelands. For more information, call 925-943-5846.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lisa Steele readies her work for CAE's spring art sale.

Creek locations.

Steele, who graduated from U.C. Berkeley with a degree in nutrition and clinical dietetics, worked as a registered dietitian in hospitals and healthcare facilities for many years before accepting a position in the food service industry. In 2002, she left the work



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pam Bivens uses a pineapple to give texture to her work.

world to devote more time to her family. By 2008, her two boys (Alec currently a junior at Miramonte and Michael now attending Arizona State University) no longer needed her undivided attention, and Steele decided to pursue her dream.

"My work is about color and texture,"

of developing a style or voice," Bivens explains. "I'm very grateful to the instructors at Civic Arts who give you lots of freedom to work on objects of personal interest under their experienced and watchful eyes." Bivens currently makes functional ceramic pieces through a combination of wheel-thrown and hand-building techniques.

Long-time Orinda Union School District teacher Kay Van Hoesen waited until she retired to indulge in her passion – gardening and gourds. An avid gardener, Van Hoesen's backyard garden has become a refuge for birds, squirrels and rabbits and is certified as a National Wildlife Federation Habitat. She discovered a birdhouse gourd plant at a nursery and planted it in her tomato cage. Before she knew it, she had 10 large gourds taking over the space. "I became fascinated by gourds. They have served many practical and artistic purposes for centuries," she explains. "They are considered the pottery of the plant world."

Van Hoesen grows most of the gourds that she decorates – up to 100 per season.

All three Orinda artists will be showing their work at CAE and the Clay Arts Guild's Spring Art Show and Sale, which opens with an artists' reception on April 30 from 5 – 9 p.m. The reception includes entertainment and refreshments and takes place at two Walnut Creek locations: Civic Arts



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Orinda's Troop 237 Inducts Eagle Scouts

David Esquivel and Matthew Duncan achieved Boy Scouting's highest award recently after completing their individual community service projects.

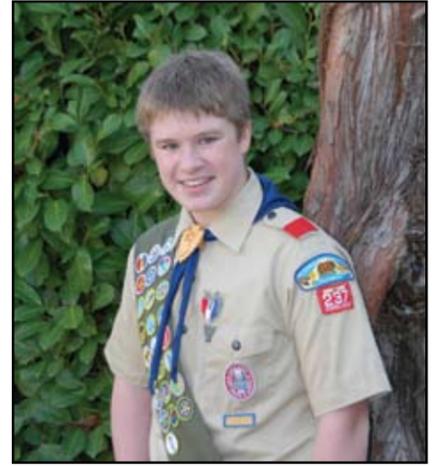


David Esquivel

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Esquivel's Eagle project benefited the Wagner Ranch Nature Area, where he created a 1,000 foot trail that is now accessible to the handicapped and people in wheelchairs for the first time. He cleared brush, roots and large tree branches before spreading gravel over the trail which now measures three feet wide and has a five foot turnaround area every 50 feet. A sophomore at Miramonte, Esquivel is the son of Gabriel and Jill Esquivel.

Sleepy Hollow Elementary School was the recipient of Duncan's Eagle project. He raised funds to landscape a weed-filled area near the school's entrance. With the funds and fellow volunteer scouts, Duncan cleared the area of weeds and overgrown bushes, installed a drip irrigation system, enriched the soil, and built a garden path. He also planted drought and deer resistant

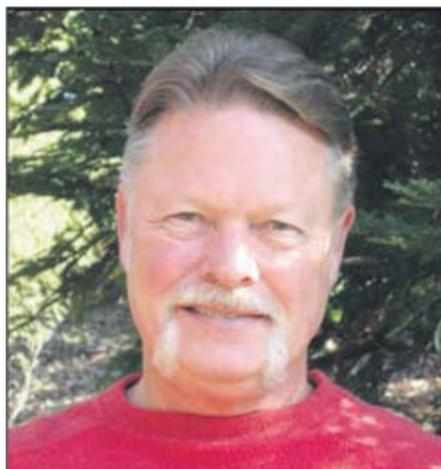


Matthew Duncan

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

plants and assembled a garden bench on the path. A sophomore at De LaSalle High School, Duncan is the son of Jeff and Anna Duncan.

— Jill Howie-Esquivel



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Girl Scout International Faire



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Eight members from Orinda Girl Scout Troop 30662 hosted the recent Girl Scout International Faire at Orinda Intermediate School. The girls, pictured above, include (L-R) Alicia Macler, Melanie Jones, Anna Blain, Sofie Woodlee, Tara Baghdassarian, Jamie Fiero, and Katie Latimer. Not pictured is Gabriela Blum. Approximately 270 girls from Orinda, Moraga and 15 countries attended. The faire celebrates international friendships and recognizes the role of Girl Scouts USA as a part of the global community. Troop 30662 consists of 16 sophomore high school students who have been together since first grade.



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Special Needs Boy Scout Troop

Orinda Masonic Lodge is now the sponsor of Orinda Troop 122, a troop for special needs boys aged 11 and up. Meetings will be held at the Orinda Masonic Center, 9 Altarinda Road in Orinda, at 6:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. Prospective scouts, Eagle Scouts, and experienced scout leaders are invited to contact Herb Lederman (925-631-0229), Mary April (925-674-6122), or Loren Piper (510-267-1740).

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CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

The Hills Are Alive With A lot More Than Music at the Bruns Amphitheater

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

California Shakespeare Theater has lots to celebrate this season. The company's annual gala raised more than \$530,000, shattering all previous records, and phase one of the building project is well underway.

When the 2010 season opens with the world premiere of John Steinbeck's *The Pastures of Heaven*, patrons will no longer trek up the hill to bathrooms in portable trailers or order refreshments from a similar portable building. The various "temporary" structures will have been replaced with a state-of-the-art building that will enhance the theater-going experience for both patrons and artists alike. The \$8.25 million Patron and Artist Center includes 31 restrooms, energy-efficient dressing rooms, wardrobe and green room for actors, a modern café and theater store, and offices for volunteers, house staff, and management. There will also be a spacious central plaza.

living roof that blends gracefully into the surrounding hills.

"Our contractor, Overaa Construction, has been good at taking into account our deadlines," says Doyle. "After all, postponing the season is not an option."

Orinda resident Jim Roethe is the capital campaign co-chair, providing leadership along with co-chair Sharon Simpson. "We started raising money two years ago and had \$7 million when the bottom fell out of the housing market," says Roethe. "We decided to do the project in stages to take advantage of the current low construction costs. We knew we wanted to upgrade the actors dressing rooms and amenities for the patrons so that's phase one. In phase two, we'll address upgrading the stage, technical elements, and seating."

Roethe notes that the majority of the contributions to the capital campaign have come from individual donations. "Less than \$.5 million came from foundations," he adds. "Our contractor is very close to being on schedule. We lost some time because of



SALLY HOGARTY

The new Patron and Artist Center being constructed above features a "living" roof that blends into the rolling hillside and includes restrooms, a cafe, and dressing rooms for the actors.



COURTESY OF LMS ARCHITECTS

An artist's rendition of the new Patron and Artist Center scheduled to be completed by the start of the new season in June.

"Previously, our actors used trailers for dressing rooms and their green room was under the stage, which got wet every time it rained," says campaign manager Paul Doyle. "With the new building, we'll also have a wardrobe facility and secure space for set pieces and props," adds marketing manager Marilyn Langbehn. "In previous seasons, our production crew has spent a lot of time hauling things up and down the hill. Now, they can set things up once and leave them for the season."

Designed by San Francisco-based Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects, the sustainable building features a vegetation-covered

the weather, but we will make our June 2 opening date even if we have to bring back a trailer or two."

The enthusiastic co-chair has been on the Cal Shakes board for 15 years and was part of the search committee for a new artistic director following the departure of Joe Vincent. "We took a bit of a risk on Jonathan [Moscone]," he recalls. "He had never directed a Shakespearean work before, but we were very impressed by his enthusiasm and his creative ideas."

A dedicated volunteer, Roethe has also served as president of the Orinda Association. [SEE SHAKESPEARE page 16]

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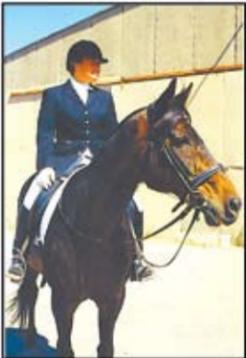
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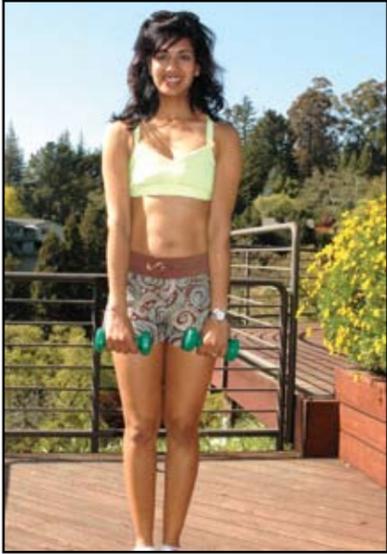
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Green Buddha Celebrates an “Attitude of Gratitude” at Calypso Twist

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

On Saturday, March 13, several hundred people explored what gratitude is all about at Calypso Twist, a unique eco-friendly retail store in Walnut Creek. The intention for the day was to celebrate and honor gratitude in our community by giving those who are living with an “attitude of gratitude” an opportunity to share what that means to them. Featured speakers, prize giveaways, light refreshments, and the sharing of stories, which would be uploaded to YouTube, focused the event.

Kris Carlson, local author of the best selling *One Hour to Live, One Hour to Love* shared her experiences. Carlson has appeared on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” and “The Today Show.” Singer/songwriter Sandi Hunt of Danville added her dulcimer tones with a performance of “Why We Sing” by Kirk Franklin. Hunt performs interactive educational shows for children. Other speakers included Joni Sare, Raw Foods Chef of Lafayette, and Amy Erez of Sugi Health & Fitness in Pleasant Hill.

Two high school students also played a part by contributing their understand-



LISA KEATING

Danna Dowell Windatt and Jeanne Dowell, co-founders of Green Buddha, with Kris Carlson, author *One Hour to Live, One Hour to Love*.

ing of gratitude – 16-year-old Alex Chen (Miramonte High) and 15-year-old Mariah Flambo (Irvington High in Fremont).

So that people could experience gratitude firsthand, Orinda’s Green Buddha raffled off items from their eco-friendly line of apparel and accessories. Speakers chimed in by adding their donations to the mix. Meanwhile, David Dowell and Grady Candler filmed gratitude stories. “We wanted to give something back to the community,” said Jeanne Dowell, co-founder of Green Buddha, and popular local yoga instructor.

Miriam Michael, owner of Calypso Twist, provided champagne with luscious tiny cupcakes, and artisan wine tasting with appetizers. This award-winning, vibrant arts and crafts gallery in downtown Walnut Creek created a warm welcome for the event. Michael offered each person who entered the store a “lei” with a blessing coin emblazoned with the word gratitude on a brightly colored ribbon, as well as a give-away bag of surprises.

“Since Green Buddha apparel is made from earth-friendly organic cotton and other soft fabrics such as bamboo and modal, we really wanted people to find out the story behind what they’ve done,” says Michael. Their organic cotton T-shirts are rain-fed and grown without the use of pesticides. The men’s and children’s line comes from Bono and Ali Hewson through their organic clothing line EDUN, which supports developing areas of the world. A percentage of all Green Buddha proceeds goes to S.E.E.D.S., which provides grass roots relief to Nepal’s poorest villages. See www.greenbuddha.net for more information.

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SISTER CITY / CHAMBER

Tabor Sister City Foundation Sponsors
“Amazing” Czech Film May 13



By KATHY G. MCCARTY
Staff Writer

The Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation will present the West Coast Premiere of the movie *Accidental Army: The Amazing True Story of The Czechoslovak Legion* and a special showing of *PRAGUE 1968, The Prague Story As Seen Through the Lens of Paul Goldsmith*, on Thursday, May 13, at the historic Orinda Theater. The event will feature an introduction by The Hon. Richard Pivnicka, Honorary Consul General of the Czech Republic.

Chicago-based filmmakers Bruce Bend-

inger and John Iltis will also be on hand for the film’s premiere. Renowned filmmaker Ken Burns has called *Accidental Army* “a noble undertaking: a history lost, returned to its people and the world.”

Billed as “The Most Amazing Story You Never Heard,” the independent film uses archives from the Czech Legion Project to tell a story that had disappeared from history: the true story of the Czechoslovak Legion which had been virtually erased by the Soviet’s 50 year rule. Film commentators included Lt Col Mike Maudlin, USA retired

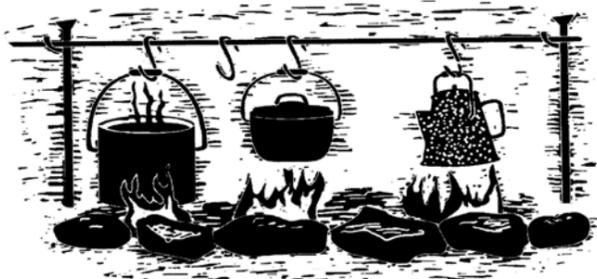
[SEE LEGION page 14]

Chamber of Commerce Is On Cloud Nine



SALLY HOGARTY

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce welcomed the new organic hand and foot therapy salon, Cloud 9, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Shown above are: Patti Camras, AJ Nisen, Sue Breedlove, Dina Zapanta, Andrea Dang (owner), Cindy Nguyen, Rick Kattenburg and Candy Kattenburg. Located at 1 Orinda Way, Suite 3, just behind Hsiang’s Restaurant in the Village, Cloud 9 uses new, green products. For more information, go to www.cloud9organicttherapy.com.



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◆ **TASK FORCE** from page 6

citizen's group call COOL (Concerned Orindans Oversight League) whose members are very concerned about the potential changes and the low attendance of residents at public meetings. COOL wants to maximize public awareness, particularly as it pertains to building height increases. The group, which held their first public meeting April 22, feels that the public might be better served by voting on the more significant changes through a ballot initiative.

The City Planning department is currently holding hearings on the various proposed changes. At press time, the next scheduled meeting was April 27 in the Library conference room. These proposals will ultimately be submitted to the City Council for approval.

For updates on when downtown revitalization is on the Planning Commission's agenda or to access the Task Force's report, go to www.cityoforinda.org. For information on COOL, email concernedorindans@gmail.com. For information on Orinda Vision, go to www.orindavision.org.

◆ **LEGION** from page 13

(advisor to the Czech Army 2003-2006), and Professor Malynne Sternstein, PhD. The documentary was also assisted by the Czech consulate and included an introduction by Madeleine Albright, who writes she is "pleased to see this unique story of personal heroism and collective freedom re-told for a modern audience. Not only is it an amazing adventure, it offers important lessons for today. Through their courage and will to survive, the Czechoslovak Legionnaires proved that a people yearning to choose their own destiny could overcome incredible odds."

The film will have two showings – 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. There will be a no-host beer and wine reception from 5-7:30 p.m. Tickets to the event are \$15 adults and \$10 students (under 18) and seniors (65+). Tickets are available on line at www.events.org/SCICAOT1/viewevent.aspx?id=26553 or you may get tickets at the Orinda Association, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. If you prefer, you may mail a check to: West Coast Premiere, The Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation P.O. Box 265, Orinda, CA 94563 (Checks must be received by May 7). According to the sponsors, seating is limited, and if the earlier shows sell out a third showing at 9 p.m. will be added.

The Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation has worked with the Orinda Lions and Rotary Clubs to help fund Czech students attending Miramonte High School, sent teachers to Tabor to teach English as a Second Language, and sponsored fellowships for physicians from Tabor.



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Planning Commission and City Council
City Meeting Schedule
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Library Auditorium
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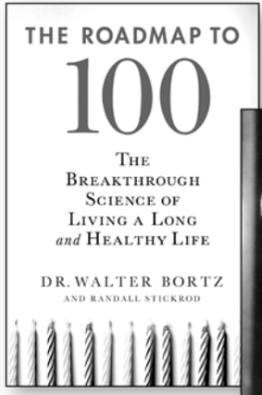
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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Second Graders Support Guide Dogs



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saklan Valley School second graders recently raised \$410 for Guide Dogs for the Blind. It was in conjunction with the eye unit they were studying where they learned the properties of light energy, prisms and rainbows, and an in-depth study of the parts of the eye. They ended the unit with a visit to the Guide Dogs for the Blind campus in San Rafael.

Varsity Cheer Team Wins First Place



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The **Miramonte High School** varsity cheer team won first place at the recent National Cheerleading Association's National Competition held at Knott's Berry Farm. More than 75 schools from all over the country participated. Shown above are (L-R) **Emelia Hildreth, Laura Weston, Sasha Belinsky, Coach Rebecca George, Maddy Karol, Tatyana Belinsky, Christie Requa, and Brianna Dickerson.**

Lamorinda Chapter of National Charity League



JAMES FIDELIBUS

Twenty-two young women from Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte high schools logged a combined total of 5,500 hours assisting local philanthropies such as Monument Crisis Center, the Contra Costa Food Bank, Loaves and Fishes, and Special Olympics over the past six years. Pictured above (L-R back row) **Morgan Pavey, Kendall Andronico, Julia Wenck, Haley Sayres, Deanna Colombo, Lauren Hogan, and Caroline Appert.** (L-R middle row) **Anna Pickrell, Lily Williams, Rachel Whittom, Eliza Galligan, Lissa Gilbert, Siena Ritelli, and Ellie Stern.** (L-R front row) **Lyndsey Park, Allison Kneis, Erika Henningsen, Sarah Osterman, Natalia Chiodo, Katie Richards, Meaghan Burke, and Elizabeth Lenczowski.**

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CONTINUATIONS

◆ **APPEAL** from page 5

including nearly \$28,000 in building permit fees for the residence alone and \$500,000 for the foundation.

"This is government at its worst," says Paul Attard. "I've never seen a situation where leaders treat people so unfairly. We are a family-owned organic bay leaf business; we've put all our capital into this project. This is where the heart and home of our business is."

Tamara Attard believes there's a lot of political maneuvering going on and that the county wants to squeeze them out. "There is a contingency of people that don't want us to be here," says Tamara Attard. "We own the last sliver of private land; we're surrounded by public land belonging to EBMUD and East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)." She says the land at 1000 Fish Ranch Road is on a list of target properties that EBRPD would like to acquire.

Tamara Attard also contends that County Supervisor Gayle Uilkema, who is also a LAFCO commissioner [the state-mandated

Local Agency Formation Commission], "is working hard to have more control over what happens in the county."

To solve the problem of sewage disposal, the Attards first applied to the county for permission to use a septic tank. This proposal was rejected because the property is too close to a tributary stream that drains into the San Pablo Reservoir. "The property lies in the watershed of the San Pablo Reservoir," says Uilkema, whose district includes Orinda. "We have to ensure that drinking water is not contaminated by sewage or dirty water. You can't have a holding tank within 50 feet of a tributary stream."

The Attards came up with another plan: To connect via a lateral pipe to the Caltrans sewer line that runs through the Caldecott Tunnel into Oakland. This line was built when the first tunnel bore was excavated in 1934. In exchange for hooking into the line, the Attards paid Caltrans \$800,000 for overdue repairs to the main sewer line.

Uilkema maintains that the Attards put the cart before the horse and didn't have the necessary authority to proceed with

building the lateral sewer line that connects with Caltrans' sewer. "According to state law, to run a sewer line from one county into another county requires the approval of the LAFCO agencies from both counties," says Uilkema. "No applications were made to either Alameda or Contra Costa. The applicants' building permit is invalid unless approved by both agencies."

Carlos Baltodano, an Orinda planning commissioner and former director of Contra Costa County's Building Inspections Department, now serves as a consultant to the Attards. He disagrees with Uilkema. "There is no need to go to LAFCO because it's clear that the agreement was between two public agencies (Caltrans and Oakland)," says Baltodano. "LAFCO has no jurisdiction over this agreement."

He says the Board of Supervisors is making the Attards out to be bandits who are acting outside of the law. He says the county was well aware of the agreement that the Attards made with Caltrans

and that the Attards have proceeded in good faith with permits and inspections. "Caltrans Superintendent of Tunnels and Tubes, Ray Mailhot, contacted planners in Contra Costa and Alameda and gave staff a tour of the proposed sewer line," says Baltodano. "Everyone was aware of what was going on."

He says the fact that the county signed off on the foundation for the new residence indicates a stamp of approval. "When the foundation is approved, it's approved for the whole house," says Baltodano. "Planners and staff at Contra Costa County are going backwards to formulate their opinion."

The Attards are now looking for ways to move forward, both working with LAFCO and exploring legal recourse. Paul Attard is grateful for the community support for his family. "Community outreach to us has been outstanding," he says. "The public is mortified by what the county is doing to us."

◆ **SHAKESPEARE** from page 11

tion (OA), the Center for Living Skills, and the General Plan Committee for Orinda. He was also the litigator for the OA's lawsuit against the developer of Theatre Square to stop the demolition of the Orinda Theater in the mid-1980s.

But Roethe and the rest of the Cal Shakes board and staff are not resting on their laurels. "Next, we need to go after corporate support for the project and continue to the next phase," Roethe says.

Phase two will focus on the Bruns Amphitheater by upgrading antiquated lighting and sound systems, building a new control booth, and rebuilding the stage. In addition, permanent seating will replace the green plastic chairs and a new windscreen and extended sunscreen will improve comfort for patrons without disrupting views of the surrounding landscape.

For more information on the campaign and the upcoming season, go to www.calshakes.org.

◆ **GALLERY** from page 8

media works containing acrylic paint or oil pastels. A mixed-media clay monoprint in the show is "Shapeshifting," 60 x 36" and "Accoutrements," a 22 x 30" mixed-media ink monoprint.

Both Stefl's brother, Larry Stefl, and her husband John Toki, have been established, professional artists for more than 25 years. They are her sounding board, critics, advocates and provide lots of inspiration. She feels that art is important because it offers something beyond, or in addition to, the everyday linear awareness that our society demands on a daily basis. For Stefl, "Art has the potential to feed our spirit." She hopes whoever views her prints will be able to see and feel whatever interior journey her art initiates – wherever that leads them. Go to pamelastefl.com and you'll see what she's talking about.

The Orinda Library Gallery is open during library hours – Mon. – Thur., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fri. and Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sun. 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Call 254-2814.

◆ **SCHOOLS** from page 1

28. A drop box will be available on May 4 at Lafayette Methodist Church, 955 Moraga Road, in Lafayette from 1 – 8 p.m.

The Measure A rally included performances from each of the high schools in the Acalanes School District – Miramonte, Campolindo, Acalanes and Los Lomas. There were vocal and instrumental performances, recitations of Shakespeare, comedy routines, and presentations by the public speaking class at Miramonte High School. Principals from all four schools also attended.

Speakers talked passionately about the value of public schools and the need to keep arts/music alive at local schools.

For more information on Measure A, visit www.AboutMeasure.org.

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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

MAY

- 1 **Friends of the Orinda Library Book Sale**, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., Library Sorting Room. Also May 6.
Moraga Art Gallery features artists Wenda Pyman and Terry Hunt, through June 5 at Rheem Center, 570 Center St., open Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Call 376-5407.
Lafayette Nursery School's Annual Science Day Of Discovery! 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Children aged 2-8 are \$4.00 each. 979 First Street, Lafayette 925-284-2448 or visit our website www.lafayettenurseryschool.com.
- 2 **Christian Science Church** Learn a prayer-based system of healing, 24 Orinda Way, 2 p.m.
- 4 **Cal Shakes** Literary Society presents *Macbeth* at Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., 4 to 7 p.m., \$45.
- 6 **Holden High School**, Spring Drama Production: *Manos - The Hands of Fate*; Also, May 7, 8 and 13, 14, and 15. For more info, please call 925-254-0199.
- 7 **First Friday Forum** presents Ambassador James Rosenthal discussing "India and China: New Heavyweights in the Ring," 1 p.m., Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, 925-283-8722.
- 8 **Orinda Baseball Association Car Wash** benefits Children's Hospital and the John Ricksen Fund, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Orinda Motors, also on May 13, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Orinda Motors.
Orinda Books presents Pauli Halsted discussing *Cuisine for Whole Health: Recipes for a Sustainable Life*, 276 Village Square, 1 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 9 **Orinda Rotary** - Frank E. Isola Rotary Field Day for Orinda students, Del Rey Elementary School, 25 El Camino Moraga, 8:30 a.m. to noon. 254-2222 or dick@burkhalternet.net.
- 11 **Orinda Books** presents Mary Lou Peters Schram discussing her novel, *Pursuing Happiness, One More Time*, 276 Village Square, 4 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 13 **Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation** presents *The Amazing True Story of The Czechoslovak Legion*, Orinda Theater 5:30 and 7:30 shows. See article pages 13-14 for details.
- 17 **Santa Maria Church** presents Cal Shakes' discussion of John Steinbeck's *The Pastures of Heaven*, 40 Santa Maria Way, free, 7 p.m. Complimentary ice cream and coffee.
- 18 **Orinda Books** presents Dr. Walter Bortz discussing his book, *The Road Map to 100: The Breakthrough Science of Living a Long and Healthy Life*, 2 p.m. Call 254-7606.
Cal Shakes Literary Society presents *Much Ado About Nothing* at Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd, 7 to 9 p.m., \$45.
- 19 **Parents of Orinda Individuals In Special Education (POISE)** meets at 40 Singingwood Lane, Orinda, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., RSVP to tague6@comcast.net.
- 21 **Orinda Ballet** presents *Coppelia*, a comic ballet, Orinda Library Theater, 6:30 p.m., also May 22 at 2 p.m., www.orindaballetacademyandcompany.com.
- 22 **Orinda Books** presents Cynthia Brian, discussing her book, *Be The Star You Are! For Teens: Simple Gifts for Living, Loving, Laughing, Learning, and Leading*, featuring local teen contributors, 276 Village Square, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606.
California Independent Film Festival screens *American Graffiti* at 12:45 p.m., 4 p.m., and 7:15 p.m. at Orinda Theater. Star Cindy Williams will be there to answer questions. Call 925-277-1355.
Pacific Chamber Symphony presents guitarist Paul Galbraith at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 8 p.m. Tickets at Orinda Arts Council, greenthal@sbcglobal.net.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified. The library will be closed on May 30 and 31.

- 1 **Saturday Morning Live!** Family story time for 3- to 5-year-olds, Picture Book area, 11 a.m. Also May 8 and 15.
Origami for Fun, learn to fold animals and figures. All skill levels welcome, suitable for those 8 years and older, parents help children less than 7 years, Tutoring Room, 2:30 to 4 p.m. Also May 8, 15, 22 and 29.
Book Sale hosted by Friends of the Library, bookshop and sorting room, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call 254-2184.
- 4 **Toddler Lapsit**, stories, songs and finger plays for 1- to 3-year-olds and their caregivers, Gallery Room, 10 and 10:30 a.m. No registration required but attendance limited to once per week. Also May 5, 11, 12 and 18.
Peek-A-Boo Time, stories, songs, rhymes and rhythms for newborns to 1-year-olds (pre-walkers) and their caregivers, Gallery Room, 11:30 a.m. Also May 11 and 18.
- 25 **Natural Solutions to Allergies**, presented by Dr. Jay Sordean, Fireside Room, 7 to 8 p.m.
- 27 **Storytelling for Adults**, presented by Contra Costa Tale Spinners. Share your stories or enjoy listening, Gallery Room, 7 to 9 p.m.

For more information on library programs, call 254-2184.

CLUB MEETINGS

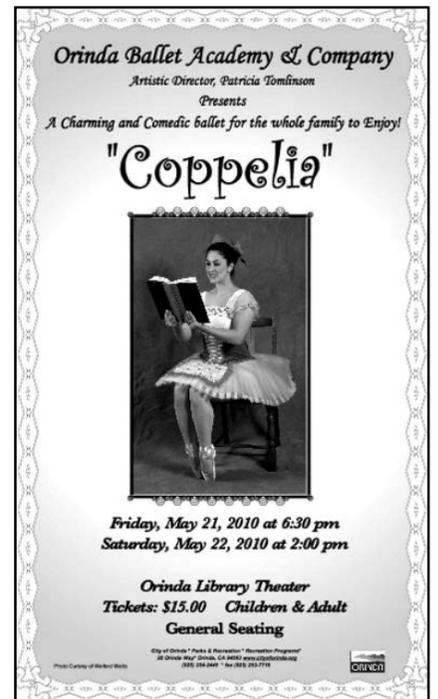
- Diablo Star Chapter #214**, Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Masonic Center. Contact Karen Seaborn, 925-689-0995.
- Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe**. Third Monday, 7:30 p.m., Moraga-Orinda Fire District Conference Room, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga, www.moragaadobe.org.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**. Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library. Call 253-1997.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Every Friday, 7 a.m., Postino's in Lafayette 254-0440, ext.463.
- Montelindo Garden Club**. Third Friday, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, 9 a.m., www.montelindogarden.com.
- Orinda Rotary**. Every Wednesday at noon, Community Center, 254-2222.
- Orinda Association**. Second Monday, 7:15 p.m., Orinda Library, May Room, 254-0800.
- Orinda Hiking Club**. Hike every Wednesday, 9 a.m., old library parking lot on Irwin Way. Call Steve at 253-0131 or visit www.orindahiking.org.
- Orinda Historical Society**. Third Wednesday of the month, 3 to 5 p.m., OHS Museum, 254-1353.
- Orinda Job's Daughters**. First and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.
- Orinda Juniors** community service group. First Tuesday of the month, September to June, 7 p.m. Contact Diane Petek and Ann Sullivan at orinda.juniors@yahoo.com for location.
- Orinda/Tabor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**. Fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260.
- Orinda Teen Advisory Council**. Second Wednesday of the month, 4 p.m., Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. For information, email orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com.
- Orinda Woman's Club**. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.
- Second Wednesday Book Group** 3 p.m. Orinda Books, 276 Village Square. Call 254-7606.
- World Affairs Book Group**. May 18, 3 p.m. will discuss *The Media Relations Department of Hizbollah Wishes You A Happy Birthday: Unexpected Encounters in the Changing Middle East* by Neil MacFarquhar, Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606.

Send calendar items to Maggie Sharpe at m.sharpe66@gmail.com

Professional Dancer Heads Orinda Ballet

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY
Staff Writer

Patricia Tomlinson, artistic director of the Orinda Ballet Academy and Company talks excitedly about celebrating the company's first year anniversary. The company, which rehearses and performs at the Orinda Community Center, offers students opportunities to perform, as well as classes for dancers Pre-K through high school. Tomlinson, a former professional dancer and New York native, studied at the School of American Ballet and has been coached by some of the greatest contemporary ballet artists of our time including George Balanchine, Alexandra Danilova and Helgi Tomasson. She danced with the Houston Ballet Company and Pennsylvania Ballet before moving to the Bay Area to dance with Diablo Ballet. After relocating to the Bay Area, she met her husband, Joe Livoti, a local musician, who coincidentally was also from New York. The couple has a son, Anthony, who is 3. Jane Black, a 19-year veteran ballet teacher at the Orinda Community Center, is thrilled to have Tomlinson teaching in Orinda. "It's exciting to have someone who has had such a career of her own. Her background really influences her ability to teach and communicate ballet to the children. It is a tremendous thing. It



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

would be like having Tony LaRussa come and teach OBA (Orinda Baseball Association) baseball."

Black explains that for children, "ballet is such a disciplined art. It requires concen-

[SEE BALLET page 18]

India and China the Topic for First Friday Forum

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

India and China: New Heavyweights in the Ring is the subject to be discussed by Ambassador James Rosenthal at First Friday Forum, May 7, in the sanctuary at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette.

Rosenthal says, "China and India have risen rapidly to become major players on the world scene. Their relations with each other, their neighbors, and the United States carry increasingly important implications for international relations generally."

It is Rosenthal's opinion that their power structure, their relative strengths and weaknesses, and their positions on key international issues need to be understood clearly if the United States is to deal with them effectively in the months and years to come. He continues, "This presentation will offer my assessment of these issues, and I trust it will help the attendees gain insight into this vital subject."

A world traveler for many years, Rosenthal visited China a year ago, and India in February of this year, to gain firsthand knowledge of these countries. He began his travels upon joining the foreign service in 1956, following service in the U.S. Marine Corps. He was political officer at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, Vietnam. He also was stationed in the Central African Republic and the Philippines before serving as Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea in West Africa in 1983 to 1986.

In addition to his diplomatic duty posts, Rosenthal taught political science and international relations at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Upon his retirement, he returned home to San Francisco where he served as executive director of the Commonwealth Club of California. Born and raised in the Bay Area, he received a BA in International Relations from Stanford University in 1954.

This is a free event beginning with refreshments at 1 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Call 925-283-872 or click on lopc.org.

CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

- Acalanes Union High School District**. First and third Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette.
- City Council**. First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.cityoforinda.org.
- Historic Landmarks Committee**. Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome. Call 925-788-7323.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**. Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library. Call 253-1997.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**. Third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**. Third Wednesday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road.
- Planning Commission**. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 253-4210.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 20

Bay Area. "Because of this we have a large take-out business." The house specialty is gyros, chicken gyros, lamb gyros. It is the staple. Yelp.com, an Internet restaurant review site routinely heaps praises on Petra Café, as do local Orindans who regularly patronize the place. "We have a very large and loyal group of customers who come in all the time, and we are grateful for them," says Masarwah, who also donates generously to the various local school auctions.

Originally from Jordan, Azmi Maserwah lived in the second largest city in Poland, Lodz, for many years, earning a Ph.D. in Food at the Technical University of Lodz, before moving on to the Bay Area. Fluent in Arabic, Polish and English, Maserwah also speaks some Russian and Spanish. Understandably, owning six restaurants and managing two of them keeps him very, very busy. It is a 24-7 lifestyle. His favorite thing to do is to read. "I am always reading. I read everything," he says.

Petra Café is open Monday – Thursday, 11 a.m. – 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. – 9:30 p.m., and Sunday, 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. For more information or to place a take-out order, call 254-5290.

Orinda Optometry Group Celebrates 25th Anniversary in Orinda

The Eng family is fairly legendary in these parts, with seven family members across three generations choosing the optometry profession as their life's work. Located at 20 Orinda Way for the past 25 years, Dr. Weylin G. Eng, and his daughter, Dr. Kristine M. Eng carry on the family tradition, together with Dr. Kelly S. Shintani, a longtime family friend who also attended optometry school with Kristine Eng. "This year marks the 75th year of continuous eye care by the Eng Family in the Bay Area," says Dr. Weylin Eng.

Their office is friendly and welcoming. The practice offers the latest cutting edge technology related to the detection of eye diseases, available treatments, contact lenses, and an attractive selection of frames if you do need a prescription. The eye wear selection includes lenses for a variety of sports such as scuba diving, swimming and special lenses for computer use. In every examination room, eye information tutorials on various subjects are available for viewing on a computer screen. "We try to provide lenses that screen out harmful ultra violet (UV) rays. UV causes cataracts and increases the risk for macular degeneration. The two populations at highest risk for eye damage are the elderly and young children," says Dr. Shintani.

From 1982 to 2006, Dr. Weylin M. Eng served as clinical professor and assistant dean and director of clinics at the U.C. Berkeley School of Optometry. He served 25 years in the U.S. Navy reserves as captain in medical services, where he was involved in numerous research projects

for the U.S. Navy, including the effect on eyes of traveling at high altitude with low atmospheric pressure and low humidity. This study recognized low humidity causes a breakdown in tears film, causing damage to the cornea.

Eng's involvement in contributing to the development of the profession continues today, as the Orinda Optometry Group is actively involved in research. "We have been a testing site for clinical trials for the major contact lens companies. Our patients appreciate the fact that we are involved in ongoing research and we are knowledgeable about the latest advances," says Dr. Weylin M. Eng.

This time of year allergies are a common problem. "Many of our patients come in



VALERIE HOTZ
(L-R) Kelly Shintani, Weylin and Kristine Eng make patients feel at home at Orinda Optometry.

with dry eyes and figure there is nothing they can do about it. Dry eyes can cause vision problems. We suggest over the counter artificial tears, which replenish tears in the eyes. One eye drop helps eyes tear up more. Another alternative is to have a punctal plug inserted, which basically blocks the tear ducts and prevents tears from draining off. A punctal plug effectively reduces dryness," explains Dr. Kristine Eng.

With the optometrist being the first line of defense not only in the detection of eye disease but also detecting other health issues, a yearly eye exam is more than just an eye exam." Eyes are the window into the body. We have detected the onset of diabetes for example, before the patient or their primary care physician is aware of it. It never ceases to amaze me people who have high cholesterol and don't know it," says Dr. Weylin Eng. The Orinda Optometry Group utilizes cutting edge digital photography to create a record of patients' eyes. "Digital photos of the eyes are state of the art these days. It is a great way to detect and monitor eye health and in addition detects high blood pressure, macular degeneration and tumors as well. It is much easier on a computer to determine changes in vascular structure," says Dr. Shintani.

The Engs have a long history of giving back to their community over the years through involvement in the Orinda Rotary Club, the Masonic Lodge, the Orinda Chamber of Commerce and their participation in the Infansee program, a one-time, no cost eye and vision assessment for babies six to 12 months old. Currently Dr. Weylin Eng is very enthusiastic about the creation of a Boy Scout Troop for developmentally

City of Orinda Walk - Bike - Bus INTERNATIONAL

Thursday, May 13, 2010



This annual event promotes walking, bicycling, and riding the bus for several reasons:

- Physical activity
- Teaches safe walking and biking skill to children
- Expresses concern for the environment
- Reduces traffic congestion, pollution, and excessive speed
- Provides sharing time between community members, parents and children

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See also:

www.cityoforinda.org • www.walktoschool.org
www.walkinginfor.org • www.bicyclinginfor.org



challenged boys and girls through the Masonic Lodge in Orinda.

For more information about the Orinda Optometry Group, please visit the website at www.orindaoptometrygroup.com or give them a call at 253-1320.

Luncheon Celebrates Local Seniors

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, Orinda's Three-Quarters Century Club is only one of two of its kind in the United States. "All residents of Orinda, 75 years and older, are invited to an afternoon of good food, friendship, fun and an interesting program - and it's all free," says founder John Fazel.

"While I have quite a list of eligible guests, perhaps some seniors haven't heard about our luncheon. I ask that those eligible and interested phone me at 925-324-2017, so I can send an invitation."

The party takes place Wednesday, June 16 in the Fellowship Hall of the Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, 11:30 a.m. As usual, it is sponsored by the church, Prudential California Realty, and the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club. They prepare the food and provide an attentive wait staff.

"This year, we look forward to honoring our first centenarian - Helen Vurek, who recently celebrated her 100th birthday," says Fazel. "We'll also crown as king the oldest man present as well as the person who is the youngest 75 year old as well as the couples who've been married the longest and shortest time."

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From Malts to Smoothies, Chillers Has It All

A fun place to stop after a visit to the library is Chillers, located at 21 Orinda Way, Suite F, near the UPS Store and Village Pizza. Carmen Trifiletti has created this wonderland of smoothies, malts, floats, ice cream, milk shakes – you name it and Chillers has it. Carmen Trifiletti opened the place this past winter and has added acai juice as an optional ingredient to the 15 smoothie concoctions available.

Originally from coastal Peru, Trifiletti moved to Albany at the age of 14 and graduated from Albany High School. “I did not

know one word of English when I arrived here. I made an effort not to speak in Spanish and in six months, I learned English. Because I had a lot of Brazilian friends, I learned Portuguese as well,” smiles Trifiletti, who went on to earn her Bachelor of Science degree in Forensic Science at Grossmont College in San Diego.

Chillers is smoothie heaven. “It’s our main focus. We added Dreyer’s Ice Cream, milk shakes, floats and frozen yogurt, with several flavors to choose from, but smoothies remain our focus. Many of our customers enjoy a little bit of nostalgia and ask for malts. It is hard to find them anymore, so we enjoy serving malts to happy customers,” she adds.

With 12 different ice cream flavors and

17 different smoothie concoctions, there are many choices. The names alone are enticing; Strawberry Splurge, Rocking Raspberry, Tropical Treat, Mango Magic. What is not to love? Trifiletti recommends adding Acai and raspberry sorbet to the Purple Pucker. She is also partial to Blueberry Burst and Tropical Treat, which mixes well with peaches and mangos - is your mouth watering yet?

The much acclaimed acai berry purportedly supports mental clarity, a positive mood, digestive function, and healthy immune function, in addition to cardiovascular health. At Chillers, two ounces of acai may be added to a 16 or 24 ounce smoothie. “I recommend adding acai to



VALERIE HOTZ
Carmen Trifiletti runs Chillers, which specializes in smoothies.

raspberry, blueberry and strawberry, because it tremendously enhances the flavor of these berries,” says Trifiletti.

On the milkshake front, 20 different flavors are available. These are made from 12 different ice cream flavors that include Mocha Almond Fudge, Macadamia Nut, Rocky Road, Oreo Cookies, Orange Sherbet and, of course, the old standby of chocolate and vanilla. Your youngster is sure to be dazzled by the Purple Cow. This milkshake creation includes milk, banana and grape juice.

Trifiletti’s husband Patrick was a nuclear engineer with the United States Navy, where he served for eight years, which

included three tours in Iraq. Currently, Patrick is an operator with Calpine. For fun, the couple enjoys going to the movies and rock climbing, although with managing the business, they have not been able to do as much rock climbing lately.

Chillers delivers smoothies to local school lunch programs including Wagner Ranch, Stanley Middle School, and Joaquin Moraga Middle School and is a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce.

The shop is open Monday through Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday and Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. For more information, please call 254-3233.

Petra Café Offers Delicious Mediterranean and Greek Dishes

For 20 years, there has been what may be considered a “hole in the wall” joint in Theatre Square offering Greek and Mediterranean fare. Originally Aleko’s, Azmi Maserwah and his cousin, Basma Maserwah, bought the tiny restaurant - it is all of 397 square feet - seven years ago and renamed it Petra Café. They continue to deliver enthusiastic customers a range of dishes on their menu that include mouth watering gyros, grilled vegetables, chicken souvlaki and lamb souvlaki, salmon and even baklava for dessert. Greek beer and wine, as well as California wine, is on the menu. It’s a great place to get authentic Greek food before or after a movie at the Orinda Theatre.

“My favorite dish is the chicken gyro.



SALLY HOGARTY
Petra’s long-time employee Alma Martinez with owner **Azmi Maserwah (R)**.

What is so special about Petra Café and one of the reasons I like coming here is that the staff is really cheerful. They always share a smile when I come in, and it is memorable,” says Valia Poursartip, as she picks up her to-go order.

“We are probably the smallest restaurant in the Bay Area,” laughs Azmi, who along with his cousins owns six restaurants in the

[SEE BUZZ page 19]

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR CONTINUED

◆ MORE LETTERS from page 18

Banning Leaf Blowers Ridiculous

The article "Residents Trying to Quiet Orinda" is the case of the tail trying to wag the dog. Mr. Kendall should first enroll in a sleep apnea clinic and solve his sleep problem. Then he would sleep at night and leaf blowers or noise would not be a problem. He could also try triple pane windows in his bedroom. Blowers, lawn mowers, shredders, chippers, jackhammers, buses, trucks all create noise. I contend that a power lawn mower which operates at 3600 rpm is just as noisy as a leaf blower at 3600 rpm. Is that the next tool you are going to ban? Sure, let's go back to a push lawn mower. This is ridiculous! That is why the Orinda City Council adopted a noise ordinance to address the noise problem.

Have you ever tried to rake wet leaves stuck to the driveway? They won't move with a rake or a broom but are easily blown into a pile with a blower. It would take me 1 1/2 hours to sweep and rake my concrete surfaces and decks whereas with a blower it can be done in 20 minutes. I have a built up roof with white rock on top. It would be impossible for me to clean the leaves and pine needles off the roof without a blower.

Particulate matter and pollution are blown in the atmosphere from China, the Sahara Desert, farmlands far and near and circle the globe falling out on our cities. Every time a car drives by dust, pollution and rubber tire dust is blown into the air. Every time the wind blows, the dust that accumulates on the trees and surfaces plus loads of pollen blow all over.

All small engines must meet the federal and California emissions control systems non-road and small off road engine regulations. Small engines exhaust is very clean.

The problem here is are we going to surrender another freedom because a small group was offended by leaf blowers. I say no. The Orinda Noise Ordinance addresses the problem nicely.

– Gerald Perry

Banning Leaf Blowers Doubles Cost

There has been some recent agitation and letters to the editor proposing the banning of leaf blowers in Orinda. If leaf blowers are banned, the current cost of hiring a gardener will double or, if you do the work yourself, your time will double. Replacing leaf blowers by raking leaves is a very expensive proposal.

Orinda already has the times and days regulated when leaf blowers can be used. These regulations are adequate. If a neighbor's gardener violates these regulations, there is a simple remedy: Go to the neighbor and give him or her a list of the days and times allowed for leaf blowing and tell him or her that their gardener is violating these regulations and if he continues to do so, he will be fined. If the violations continue, get the gardener's name and address from the neighbor, report to the Orinda Police Department and follow up on the police. This will cure your problem. If you don't have the courage to do the above, the problem is you not the leaf blower. You can get a list of leaf blower days and hours by calling the Orinda Police Department.

There is a small minority of Orindans who think everybody in Orinda is rich. They aren't, and they don't have money to waste satisfying the whims of this minority.

– Clyde Vaughn

Help Fill The Gap

We are writing to urge your readers to

join us in voting yes on Measure A. The Acalanes Union High School District is the highest performing high school district in California despite being at the bottom of the list for state funding. We are able to provide an excellent educational experience for our students due to local funding which fills the gap left by continued budget cuts from the state. That gap is about to get wider. The AUHSD is facing a \$4.8 million budget deficit and will need to eliminate approximately 50 qualified teachers, 7th period classes, and numerous elective and enrichment programs. Our outstanding schools risk being reduced to average ones. Their excellent reputations are in jeopardy, negatively impacting not only students but homeowners alike.

The cost of Measure A (\$112/year for five years) is miniscule compared to the benefits we all reap from our outstanding public high schools. The local funding life line is critical to ensure our schools continue to perform at the exceptional level for which they are known and respected. Please show your commitment to public education and vote yes on Measure A.

– Dan and Kathe Friel

Thinking Ahead

Some people may think that it's a bit premature for a Del Rey Elementary School parent to be so concerned about the impending budget cuts to Acalanes Union High School District. The cuts to AUHSD may not affect my 3rd grade child today, but if the district cuts \$4.8 million next year, how much will be cut the following years.

The state's non-partisan Legislative Analyst Office predicts the state will be in a budget crisis for at least four more years. The rebuilding of programs could take longer than a decade. The district served preliminary layoff notices for 56.9 full time teaching positions, which will impact all programs, not just electives.

Local support is the only alternative. Our schools need the help we can supply by supporting the Measure A parcel tax measure. We are fortunate to live in a community that has high regard for standards and great expectations for education. This five-year \$112 parcel tax will help maintain our high schools' excellent academic and elective programs. A "Yes" vote on Measure A is an investment in all students in the community.

– Mary Friese

Dire Circumstances Face District

As a former teacher and administrator, I strongly urge you to consider voting yes on Measure A. Having worked in Orinda and other school districts in the bay area, I can say that our public schools are the jewel in the crown of our community, due to a phenomenal combination of student talent, financial support, parent involvement and high district standards. I'm always pleased, but not surprised, to hear of my former Orinda students' achievements and successes.

Superintendent Stockton has outlined the dire circumstances facing the district and the aggressive action taken by employees to mitigate the financial situation, ranging from severe reductions in administrative staff, to rarely heard of teacher compensation cuts. Sadly, after three years of significant cuts, the district faces further cutbacks, effecting numerous academic offerings and potential loss of over 50 teaching positions, which may limit or eliminate important programs that contribute to the academic excellence found in our high schools.

Remember, Measure A is only temporary and will sunset in five years. At \$112 per parcel, it is important that we support this emergency measure to maintain the quality

of our schools during this difficult budget crisis.

– Pamela Goode

Education Still a Top Priority

Growing up in California I attended public schools that were the benchmark for the nation. Now, the California promise of a quality education for all is tarnished. Fortunately, my daughters live in a community where education is still a top priority. California currently ranks near the bottom of the nation in education yet our schools rank in the top. The quality of local schools characterizes our community as much as the beautiful rolling hills and view of Mt Diablo. This quality is thanks to the tremendous wisdom of voters who have approved previous local school parcel taxes.

Our schools receive less than the national average. The past three years our schools have lost ground as Sacramento play games with the budget. The best way to overcome the gridlock of Sacramento politics is through local action. And that's why I am supporting Measure A. It's a local solution that benefits local high schools. With Measure A, we can save critical core classes in math, science, and English, as well as music and libraries. I am an optimist. I am confident the voters will vote yes on Measure A.

– Jane Hyde

Preserve Quality of Education

While the state continues to increase its spending on prisons, we are deconstructing quality education for our children and, thereby, compromise the strength of California's future economy. Being the parent of a student who will be entering Miramonte High School next August, I am gravely concerned that programs that have existed and excelled for decades may now be eliminated.

With many younger teachers on its staff, Miramonte has the potential to have the most teachers released in the district. The concept of local schools should include a stable environment for students, not a rotation of staff caused by budget uncertainties. Recently, Miramonte was recognized as one of the top 100 schools in the country. It ranks in the top 1 percent of all the schools in California. To allow such a successful school to lose the programs which has made it so great should be of great concern to our community.

By supporting Measure A, Miramonte and the other high schools in the Acalanes Union High District will be made to offer seven periods of instruction to students, keep programs such as public speaking, and provide a comprehensive science curriculum.

Get smart, vote smart, vote for Measure A.

–Inez Hollander Lake

Avoid Drastic Cuts With Measure A

I am writing to urge readers to Vote Yes on Measure A to avoid drastic cuts to our top rated but already under-funded Acalanes Union High School District. With five teenagers (yes, 5!) with a diverse set of talents and interests, our family provides a good example of how all students will be impacted if Measure A does not pass. Our junior, who is interested in engineering or medicine, will only be able to take one science class and find it tough to compete for college admissions against kids who have had the freedom to focus on math and science. Our sophomore, who has a knack for history and has found his voice through Public Speaking, could see that award-winning and state-ranked program eliminated. Our children entering high school will have a shorter six period day with no electives

and will have to fight to get basic foreign language and science classes. Non-core classes that foster leadership and spirit so essential to the high school experience would be eliminated. All will face much larger class sizes.

Measure A is necessary to give us the local, reliable funding we need to close the budget gap. As we have researched this issue, we have learned that our district receives substantially lower funding than others because the property taxes we collect do not cover the cost of our schools. Piedmont, a district with comparable test scores and property tax situation, has an annual parcel tax of \$2,500. At \$112 per parcel (less than 31 cents per day), Measure A would bring annual parcel taxes in our district to just \$301 – a fraction of Piedmont's with similar quality results.

We need to continue to fight for education reform in California but cannot afford to risk our children's educational experience over the next five years in the process. Once programs are cut, they can take years to restore. Measure A is the only solution for maintaining programs in the short term while we push for longer term structural reform.

Please join us in voting Yes on Measure A.

– Kim Laughton and Steve Maupin

Ensure Schools for Next Generation

California under-funds its schools – we rank 46th in the nation on spending per pupil. Acalanes Union School District's response for many years has been to invest locally controlled funds from a school parcel tax. These funds allow Acalanes, the top ranked high school district in California, to remain competitive in spite of consecutive years of state budget reductions.

Our children graduated from Miramonte and have gone on to top notch University of California programs. We are happy to pay an additional \$112 annually to ensure that the students of the future have the same opportunities that our kids had. Core curriculum, staffing, AP classes, foreign language, journalism, public speaking and other vital programs are all at stake.

Please join us in supporting Measure A.

– Robin and Paul Ludmer

Support the Children

Voting yes on Measure A is a vote for our children. It is as simple as that. We volunteered in their classrooms, worked in the lunchrooms, coached their sports teams, and sat for hours listening to them read when they were young. We drive them to events, sit for hours on the sidelines cheering them on, and anxiously wait with them until their test results are published. After all that investment of time, money, emotion and love, how can we turn our backs on them now? When everyone leaves the room, we remain. Our children have grown up believing that we can be depended upon. The government has failed them. Voting no will not result in a change in direction or policy from Sacramento. Voting no will mean less money, less teachers, fewer opportunities. It may be a sad truth, be we are all that is left. It is what we signed up for when we had children. Would you give up dinner and a movie for your kids? In a heartbeat. Vote yes and stay in for the night. Your children (and their children) will thank you.

– Sharon Noble

Keep Property Values High

High quality education is what inspired most of us to choose to live in Lamorinda, and current buyers agree: we continue to

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enjoy healthy property values despite the real estate downturn. The Acalanes School District provides an education rivaling that of private schools which charge three times as much as Acalanes spends per child. Unfortunately, the economic downturn has conspired to threaten what we have all worked so hard to build.

In times of crisis, all stakeholders need to contribute to a solution, and fortunately, many groups have already taken action. The district has cut back administrative expenses by 20 percent over the last several years, Parents' Clubs and Foundations have stepped up fundraising efforts, teachers have made an exceptional contribution by voluntarily agreeing to higher class sizes and a 2.5 percent pay cut with no raises until at least 2012, and parents, businesses, and community members have given even more of their own diminished resources to help make up the difference. This cooperative effort is commendable, but it is not enough. An emergency parcel tax (Measure A) is a necessary step to maintaining essential academic programs as well as our property values. Please join us in voting yes.

– Deb Stephenson & Mitchell Reed

Preserve Core Curriculum

Acalanes Union High School District is facing a \$4.8 million budget cut,

eliminating more than 50 full time teachers and core curriculum.

When we bought property in Lamorinda, we knew our children were guaranteed an academically-top education, at public school "prices." Who among us didn't weigh the huge savings and peace of mind we would experience during our children's K-12 years thanks to our top schools?

Public education in Lamorinda is an amazing bargain but is not free. Our parcel taxes are not only a tremendous investment in our children's future, they literally ensure the continued viability of our schools and property value. Passage of Measure A demonstrates to Lamorinda citizens and prospective citizens alike that our community is still among the best places to live and raise a family.

For our children's future and our economic well being, we must continue to support our schools without reservation. In these tough economic times, we all are getting by on less. But Measure A's \$112 per parcel annual investment in our schools - allowing us to preserve our core curriculum and teacher positions - is something we cannot afford to do without. Vote Yes on Measure A!

– Ben and Janet Riley

Get Out the Red, White and Blue – It's Time to Celebrate!

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The Orinda Association began the 4th of July parade in the early 1980s as a way to celebrate not only Independence Day but also to celebrate "community." As Orinda has become a city and the community has grown, so has the celebration. What began as a parade is now an entire day of entertainment, good food, and good friends.

Since this year's 4th of July falls on a Sunday, the parade will start at 11 a.m. in order to accommodate the many church services along the parade route. But the day still begins early with a pancake breakfast sponsored by the Orinda Roadrunners and the traditional flag-raising ceremony at the flagpole in front of the Community Center at 7:55 a.m.

The Roadrunners' Fun Run and Haley's Run-for-a-Reason take off at 8 a.m. in front of the Community Center and at 9 a.m. the fun begins in the park with activities for children and live music. The Friends of the Orinda Library will have their book sale with lots of great bargains beginning at 10 a.m.

Then the jewel of the day -- the parade --

begins at 11 a.m. traveling from the BART station to the Crossroads side of the Orinda before going under the freeway and over to the Village side. Lots of community groups and organizations will be "strutting their stuff" along the parade route including several musical and dance groups. And, of course, many in the parade will be handing out candy to those watching.

Following the parade, it's time to head back to the park for more music, food, a silent auction and wine tasting, and lots of kids activities.

For a booth, parade, or sponsorship form, go to the Orinda Association's website at www.orindaassociation.org.



The Orinda Starlight Village Players showed their theatrical side during the parade.



Colorful participants enjoyed the Orinda Roadrunner's pancake breakfast to start off the day.

Seasoned Shopper

Recipes

BARBARA KOB SAR

SKILLET GREENS

Cooked greens make a great side dish. This recipe combines the greens with a little garlic and pancetta.

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 ounces pancetta ham
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- One half pound Swiss chard, stems removed
- One half pound beet greens, stems removed
- One half pound spinach
- One half pound mustard greens
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add pancetta and cook until brown, about 5 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Add garlic to drippings in skillet and cook 30 seconds. Increase heat to medium high. Add Swiss chard. Cover and cook 3 minutes. Stir in remaining greens. Cover and cook until greens are wilted and tender, about 2 to 3 minutes. Return pancetta to skillet and season with pepper.

Serves 4.

CHERRY SALSA

Yummy with grilled chicken or pork, tortilla chips or on a turkey sandwich. I've basically just substituted tomatoes with cherries.

- One half pound cherries, pitted and chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- One quarter cup cherry preserves
- 1 to 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped jalapeno
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped cilantro

Combine all ingredients in a medium size bowl. Chill at least ½ hour to meld the flavors.

Makes about 1 and one half cups.



Fresh radishes and other seasonal vegetables can be found at Orinda's Farmers' Market



The Chamber of Commerce did last year's parade proud with its Statue of Liberty entry.



The Orinda All Volunteer Marching Band kept the day lively.



Realtor Mary Chatton Brown showed her patriotism with her colorful outfit.

VOTE

Measure A is a mail-in only election and all votes must be received at the County Election Office, 555 Escobar Street, in Martinez by May 4. Postmarks do not count. Ballots should be mailed by April 28